

One Man's Opinion**CIA Reduces Its Mystique,
Opens Door for Briefing**

By BERT MILLS

Gnt Washington Correspondent

Adm. Stansfield Turner, director of Central Intelligence, has proclaimed a new open-door policy for the CIA. I was in one of the first groups of visitors to be welcomed for a briefing at the heretofore super-secret foreign intelligence agency. This is how it went.

Our group was the Washington professional chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists. Surprise No. 1 was that the briefing was arranged at all. Another surprise was that members were allowed to bring guests, and many did. The only restrictions were a ban on cameras and tape recorders and on foreigners. Non-U.S. citizens had to supply their social-security number in advance.

The CIA has a countryside setting in a wooded area of Langley, Va., about a 20-minute drive from the White House. Even the location of the headquarters used to be secret, but now there is a modest sign directing visitors where to leave the parkway. There is a guard house at the entrance gate, but I did not even have to give my name to receive a visitor slip for my windshield.

I WAS ABLE to drive to the front door of the main building connected by tunnel to the headquarters. My briefcase was examined quickly, just as it is at the White House, Capitol, and Pentagon, and I was handed a lapel badge saying "Conference Visitor."

The briefing in a theater-like auditorium was conducted by a CIA veteran whose title is senior briefer. His chief message was that collecting intelligence does not necessarily involve spying. He also advised that no CIA staffers are "agents." Their people are "intelligence

officers." In intelligence lingo, an agent is an informer who may or may not be paid.

Many CIA employees are analysts who sift and weigh information collected by others. The object is to determine the intentions and capabilities of unfriendly foreign nations, including political, military and economic factors. Totalitarian countries, of course, impede the collection of such intelligence in all possible ways.

The briefer employed a bit of showmanship. He used a blackboard featuring multi-colored lights. In a James Bond touch, he noted that intelligence officers sometimes were caught with written notes, but the CIA uses special paper that dissolves quickly in water, as he demonstrated. If no water is handy in an emergency, the officer eats the paper, and he did.

A question-and-answer period followed. The CIA does not tell all, including its secret budget. Nor would the officials comment on the troubles of the former director Richard Helms, who may be indicted for lying to a congressional committee. The questioner was told the Attorney General or President would make the decision on prosecution.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first of two columns on the CIA. The second will be published next week.



Mr. Turner